

THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST

8 MAY 1962
~~TOP SECRET~~

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1. Laos

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[redacted] the Royal army force withdrawing from Nam Tha was still under some enemy pressure. This makes the government's contention that an orderly, pre-planned regroupment is under way sound overly-optimistic.

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d. There is, meanwhile, new evidence of a swelling Chinese Communist presence nearby. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Chinese are now working on a railroad in Yunan province in the direction of the Burmese border and toward a possible link-up with the road they have been building into northern Laos-- this at a time when economic stringency has forced Peiping to drop many of its building projects.

2. Reported Soviet
announcement of
test resumption

[REDACTED] The broadcast to Japan, which is the basis of this morning's press stories, appears to have been one made over the weekend in which the Soviets merely restated their contention that they cannot stand idly by in the face of our tests.

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3. Sputnik XVI linked
to lunar flight study

Data on the most recent space vehicle--the one launched on April 26 and recovered 3 days later--indicate that it is part of a new phase in the Soviet space program which aims at extending the duration of manned flights in near-earth orbits as a step toward manned lunar exploration. In size and other characteristics it is akin to the Vostok vehicles which carried Gagarin and Titov aloft.

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4. Syria

a. The escape from prison yesterday of one-time strong-arm security chief Abdul Sarraj, a UAR vice president under Nasir, introduces another element of instability into the volatile mixture. There is a suspicion in Damascus, however, that the government, although it has expressed a proper chagrin, had no enthusiasm for bringing to trial a leading symbol of Nasirite socialism.

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b. The notion that the US is backing Nasir in Syria has gained widespread credence there, to the extent that our Embassy people are much embarrassed.

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NOTES

- A. UN authorities in the Congo have no information to confirm the allegations aired by the central government over the weekend of fighting between its forces and Tshombé's gendarmerie in northern Katanga. Present indications are that the charges are either groundless or much-exaggerated [REDACTED]

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- C. Cuba is reaping the results of its noisy and anything but in-between performance at Belgrade last September, and since, and does not figure in Yugoslavia's plans for the next non-aligned economic conference for which the spade work is now being done. [REDACTED]

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DOCUMENTS OF INTEREST

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE